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PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE RALEIGH NC
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...NORTH CAROLINA HURRICANE AWARENESS WEEK...

This week has been declared North Carolina's Hurricane Awareness Week for 2008. All week long the National Weather Service will be issuing informative messages to help you prepare for hurricane season.

Today we will talk about hurricane history and North Carolina.

North Carolina receives more than its share of tropical storms and hurricanes. Over the past 15 years North Carolina has seen presidentially declared disasters resulting from hurricanes in locations from the Outer Banks to the Blue Ridge mountains. No part of our state has gone unaffected from these giant storms.

Ever since the first expeditions to Roanoke Island in 1586 hurricanes have been recorded to have caused extensive damage to the state. Reliable tracking and classifications of tropical systems did not begin until nearly 300 years later in 1886. Since that time over 1000 tropical systems have formed in the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico. Nearly 20 percent of all these tropical systems passed within at least 300 miles of North Carolina. Statistically the coast of North Carolina can expect to receive a direct hit from a land falling tropical system once every 4 years. For the remainder of the state, tropical systems can bring the threat of heavy rains, flooding and tornadoes nearly every summer as tropical systems make landfall to our south and then move north.

Since records have been kept dating back to 1806, around 65 tropical systems have made direct landfall on the North Carolina coast. Even more disturbing is the fact around 100 tropical systems have moved through and **impacted** the state **without** actually making landfall along **our** coast. North Carolina's unique geography with respect to its protruding coastline makes the state a favorable target for hurricanes. Residents living in the eastern half of North Carolina from Raleigh to the coast stick out in the Atlantic Ocean along the same longitude as the Florida coast and Bahamas. This geographical fact makes the coast from Wilmington to Cape Hatteras the most favorable location for hurricane and tropical storm landfalls.

The most active months for tropical systems in North Carolina are August and September. However hurricanes have wreaked havoc as early as late June and as late as mid November. The peak tropical activity usually occurs in a six week period from mid August to late September. During active cycles in hurricane activity North Carolina can experience multiple hurricanes and tropical storms within weeks of each other. Years when North Carolina has been hit by more than one tropical system include...

1842
1899

1933
1954 (Carol...Edna and Hazel)
1955 (Connie...Diane and Ione)
1971 (Doria and Ginger)
1996 (Arthur...Bertha and Fran)
1999 (Dennis and Floyd)
2004 (Bonnie, Charley, Gaston, Jeanne, Frances and Ivan)
2006 (Alberto and Ernesto)

Hurricane Hazel remains the most powerful hurricane to ever make landfall in North Carolina. Hazel struck a category 4 hurricane with winds of 144 mph. Since that time hurricane Floyd in 1999 became the costliest hurricane in North Carolina history. Sixty-six counties were presidentially declared disaster areas following Floyd. Total storm losses exceeded six billion dollars. Hurricane Fran...the second costliest hurricane in state history...was the last hurricane to severely impact the Raleigh area.

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